



North American Hardware and Paint Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Entrepreneur Receives 2026 Young Retailer of the Year Award

INDIANAPOLIS, May 8, 2026—Haley Chapel, chief operating officer for Timberline Ace Hardware in Livingston, Montana, was recently named one of the independent home improvement industry's 2026 Young Retailer of the Year honorees by the North American Hardware and Paint Association (NHPA).

This year marks 30 years of the Young Retailer of the Year program, which identifies and promotes the next generation of aspiring independent home improvement, paint and decorating retailers. It recognizes individual achievement by industry retailers age 35 and younger throughout the U.S. and Canada. Honorees are chosen based on a number of criteria, including professional milestones, community engagement, continuing hardware industry education and extracurricular activities, and fall into one of three categories: multistore, under \$3 million sales volume and over \$3 million sales volume.

Sponsors of the 2026 Young Retailer of the Year program include: American Hardware and Lumber Insurance (AHLI), ECI Software Solutions, Midwest Fastener and The Wooster Brush Company.

Cody Goeppner, NHPA director of education and training and 2020 Young Retailer of the Year honoree, says the recognition was a turning point for him as it highlighted the hard work he had poured into his career and introduced him to a broader community of passionate, forward-thinking retailers.

"As someone who grew up in my family's hardware store and spent years as a retailer myself, I know firsthand how much heart, grit and innovation it takes to succeed in this industry," Goeppner says. "It truly is full circle and an incredible honor for me to support and celebrate the next generation of leaders. This program shines a spotlight on the people who are shaping the future of independent retail, and based on this year's class, the future is bright."

Haley Chapel leads with a simple belief: If we get the people right we will get the business right.

Although Haley grew up around the family business, she did not originally plan to return to it. After pursuing her own education and path, she returned to Timberline Ace eight years ago in a full-time professional role. Since then, she has become known for her thoughtful leadership style, curiosity and commitment to people development. Haley values the unique role independent hardware stores play within their communities and believes strong businesses are built by investing in people first—both employees and customers. She brings a balance of forward-thinking leadership and deep respect for the relationships and community roots that have long defined Timberline Ace Hardware.

Serving as a second-generation leader in her family's business and helping lead a company centered around serving others is one of her greatest honors. Today Haley serves as chief operating officer of Timberline Ace Hardware. During the COVID-19 years, the company expanded from three locations to five, with stores in



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Anaconda, Butte, Columbia Falls, Evergreen and Livingston, Montana. During that time, Haley helped guide the leadership team through adopting the Entrepreneurial Operating System. She worked intentionally to connect that framework to Timberline's mission to positively impact employees, customers and community. That alignment helped bring discipline to how the company plans, makes decisions and holds itself accountable.

From small daily decisions to major investments in people or capital, Haley consistently weighs those choices against Timberline's mission and values. The mission is not simply a slogan on the wall—it has become something the entire organization pays attention to and works to live out in the way the business operates.

The place where Haley's leadership is most visible is in how she develops people. Under her leadership, Timberline Ace has built a strong culture of learning and professional growth. Haley championed the Ace Badge program across the company and set the expectation that every full-time associate complete all eight core badges. Today Timberline associates have collectively earned more than 500 badges through the Ace learning platform. She has also supported leadership development through Franklin Covey training and regular mentoring of emerging leaders throughout the organization.

Haley's leadership also extends well beyond Timberline Ace. She currently serves as president of Progressive Ace Leaders (PAL), a national organization dedicated to developing the next generation of leadership within the Ace cooperative. Closer to home, Haley serves as the Montana Ace Retailer Group Leader. Montana presents unique challenges because the distance between communities often means a full day of travel simply to gather with other retailers. Through Haley's leadership, the group has grown to nearly 50 stores.

Retailers gather regularly for learning sessions, collaboration and conversations about the business both within Montana and during national Ace events. The group has also expanded its fundraising and support for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. Since 2022, the Progressive Ace Leaders organization and the Montana Ace retailer group have together raised more than \$1 million for Children's Miracle Network Hospitals, including Shodair Children's Hospital in Montana.

Haley also invests time in sharing knowledge with fellow retailers. She has served on multiple Ace Retailer Input Teams where retailers provide direct feedback on national programs and initiatives. Haley has also encouraged Timberline to participate in pilot programs that help Ace test new initiatives before they are rolled out across the cooperative.

What stands out most when you work with Haley is how deeply she cares about the people around her. She combines that care with an uncommon drive to keep learning, improving and helping others do the same. Whether she is mentoring a new leader in one of our stores, working with fellow retailers across the Ace network or strengthening community partnerships she brings energy and purpose to the work.

The 2026 Young Retailer of the Year honorees will be recognized as part of the Independent Awards Gala at the 2026 Independent Home Improvement Conference in Orlando on July 29. For more information on the Young Retailer of the Year awards program, honorees and more, visit YourNHPA.org/yroty.

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